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for instance, "Nordmænd i det nittende aarhundrede," 2 : 201-203); but these accounts are all rather fragmentary, and we are glad to have now this fuller study of the method of her work and of what she accomplished.

Olea Crøger was of royal descent, her ancestry going back on her father's side to Haakon V, through Inger Ottesdotter Rømer til Austraat. On her mother's side she was of Danish descent, being descended from Johannes Nissen Crøger, pastor at Aastrup near Haderslev (Haderleben) in North Slesvig, 1537-59. Olea Styhr Crøger was born in Hitterdal, in eastern Telemarken, in 1801. She is spoken of by all those of her time who knew her as a remarkable and unusually gifted woman. Trained in music, she also became interested in ballad-music, and through these in the ballads themselves. It was owing to her in considerable measure that the melodies of a large number of popular ballads were rescued from oblivion. From the beginning of the early thirties she also made extensive collections of the ballads among the peasants of Upper Telemarken,—a region in which the ballad was still the common property of everybody. Her collection was published by M. B. Landstad, in connection with his own collections, in "Norske Folkeviser," printed in 1853. Berge gives an interesting account of her method of securing the ballads, of her relations to other collectors, of Jørgen Moe's hesitation to give up the editorial rights after she had once offered to sell him her collection, and, finally, of her collaboration with Landstad during the forties. There are five of Olea Crøger's ballads printed with the study (pp. 46-62), and other valuable material.

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ADOLF TAYLOR STARCK. *Der Alraun; Ein Beitrag zur Pflanzensagenkunde* (Ottendorfer Memorial Series of Germanic Monographs, No. 14). Baltimore, 1917. viii + 85 p.

THIS investigation of the mandrake belief is a welcome addition to the literature of a rather neglected field, the study of plant-lore. The mandrake is a fabulous plant, which, according to the fully-developed legend, springs from an effusion from a thief's body, and is found growing under the gallows on which he has been hanged. When a mandrake is pulled out of the ground, it utters so terrible a shriek, that any one who hears the cry dies; but if one loosens the earth about the plant, so that it is attached to the soil only by small fibres, and then ties it with a string to a black dog, the dog, in pursuing a bit of bread or meat, will jerk the root from the ground. In this way one can obtain it without danger to one's self, although at the expense of the dog. Properly cared for, the root will be of great advantage to the possessor: it can forecast future events, disclose secrets, make friends for its owner, keep him from poverty, and, if he is childless, give him children. If one lays a coin away with it over night, one will find two pieces of money in the morning; but do not select too large a coin, lest the vitality of the root be diminished. In the event of the owner's death, the mandrake passes to his youngest son, who should cause a bit of bread and a coin to be laid in the coffin. The eldest son inherits it if his brother has died. Such briefly is the legend of the mandrake, an *ungeheueres Mischprodukt*, as Dr. Starck calls it, of accretions from the most varied sources.

Dr. Starck has traced the origin of the older and more stable traits in

the legend. The Greek physicians were acquainted with a real plant, the mandragora; and, although they occasionally confuse it with other plants, they give it a place in the *materia medica* with only passing mention of certain superstitious features, which are suggested in the main by its narcotic qualities. The more striking details in the account seem to have taken rise in the Near East rather than in Greece, and are not at first attached to the mandragora. The notion of employing a dog to obtain the root is Syrian, or perhaps Egyptian. Its human shape, and its origin in a human secretion, probably come from somewhat farther East, from Mesopotamia or Persia. The combination of these elements (the medicinal use of the mandragora, the story of the dog, the shape of the plant, and its mythical origin) makes up the *Alraunsage*. Later additions have been made in Europe; and of these, the services which the mandrake performs as a sort of familiar spirit are the most important. In such a composite product as this legend the search for a symbolic explanation of the whole is, as Dr. Starck says, hopeless; yet Kuhn, seeing it in the legend of a *Blitzpflanze*, has attempted one, and this explanation is to be found in so recent a study as Schlosser, "Die Sage vom Galgenmännlein" (1912). To find a satisfactory etymology for the names of the mandrake proves to be equally hopeless. Dr. Starck devotes several pages to the mandrake in literature, and finds that German writers seem to have been rather more familiar with it than the French or English.

As the bibliography (pp. 80-82) and the foregoing outline show, the subject has been covered fairly completely, with particular emphasis on the development of the mandrake legend in the middle ages. Many questions have of necessity been left unanswered. One would like to see a fuller and more systematic exposition of the mandrake belief as it exists to-day. The promised third volume of Dähnhardt's "Natursagen," however, may be expected to complete this laborious task. By way of conclusion a few notes may be given on this point. Mandrakes have been made in recent years in Asia Minor, and the Märkisches Museum in Berlin has a collection of them (see Friedel's lectures before the Verein für Volkskunde, summarized in "Zs. d. V. f. Vk.," 13 [1903] : 126, and 19 [1909] : 127; but his promised article has not yet, so far as I know, appeared). Scattered bits of information about mandrakes in Germany are noted by Woeste, Thaler, and Zingerle in "Zs. f. d. Myth.," 1 (1853) : 238, 293, 335, 461, and by Kuhn ("Sagen aus Westfalen," 2 : 27-28). Polites ("Μελέται περὶ τὸν βίον καὶ τῆς γλώσσης τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ" [Athens, 1904], 2 : 915) seems to have collected the evidence for Greece (see Dieterich, "Zs. d. V. f. Vk.," 15 [1905] : 391-392); and for Poland see Zíbrt and Gustawicz as cited by Polívka (*ibid.*, 15 : 207). Short notices on the French superstitions may be found in Nicole Bozon, "Les Contes Moralisés," p. 254, and in Sébillot, "Le Folklore de France," 3 (Paris, 1906) : 484, 487. Bédier ("Les Fabliaux" [2d ed.], 460) suggests that the *fabliau* "L'enfant de neige" might have been intended to combat such superstitions about conception as the one which ascribes to the mandrake the power to overcome sterility; and he refers to a short chapter of Andrew Lang's "Custom and Myth" (pp. 143-155), in which the mandrake belief is discussed from the point of view of the anthropologist (see also E. S. Hartland, "Primitive Paternity," 1 [London, 1909] : 44-47). Wackernagel's conjectured *Albruna* in the "Germania" (Starck,

p. 66) seems to be confirmed by some Spanish manuscripts of Tacitus (see "Modern Philology," 1 [1903]: 204). The use of "Mandrag" as an objuration is curious (see "Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy," v. 29 ["Poems of Dunbar," Scottish Text Society, 2: 12]). No doubt more such gleanings by the way could be noted and added to Dr. Starck's study; but they will probably not be numerous and significant enough to impair its value as a substantial contribution to our knowledge about the mandrake.

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NATALIE CURTIS BURLIN, *Negro Folk-Songs* (Hampton Series). In four books. Book I. New York, G. Schirmer & Co., 1918.

SOME months ago there was put into my hands for review a copy of the first book of the Hampton Series of "Negro Folk-Songs," by Natalie Curtis Burlin. Owing to a multitude of other pressing duties, it was laid aside without being opened, and was not again taken out until very recently. Therefore, with all due apologies to Mrs. Burlin, the deeper for the sense of gratitude with which the reading of this little book has inspired me, I now wish to offer an appreciation of it. In it Mrs. Burlin has given to the world at least two of the most moving and pathetic of all Negro spirituals, — "Go down, Moses," and "Couldn't hear Nobody pray." About two years ago it was my privilege to hear these two among many others sung spontaneously and informally by a Southern woman who had been brought up on them by her Negro nurses. Wholly untrained as she was vocally, the singing of those two songs affected her audience deeply. The matter of securing these and other old melodies for publication was spoken of at the time as something much to be desired, but the project could not then be undertaken by any of the group. Therefore it was with a real sense of obligation that I realized what Mrs. Burlin had accomplished, as I read the songs, and noted their faithfulness to Negro style and the entirely successful manner in which proper renditions have been indicated.

The book would lose much without the dignified, sympathetic, and restrained explanations which accompany each number, and which at once put the reader in accord with the spirit of the Negro and his songs. It is a relief to observe the note to the effect that piano accompaniments are for practice only, and then for the benefit of white singers, and to discover the very evident care with which the author gave her results after long listening to the singers and to phonographic records made by them. It does not matter that there are other versions of these songs, or even that every rendition given by different groups varies from every other in some particular. This only emphasizes the truth that the human creative instinct will not be bound, and especially the musical instinct of the Negro. It is sufficient that one good, simple, beautiful, and truthful version of each has been carefully noted for preservation and for the purpose of enriching the musical literature of the world. Indeed, no one can count himself poor who has learned them.

It is a pleasure to know that there are several such books in process of publication; and it is to be hoped that Mrs. Burlin will continue to gather these priceless bits of folk-song before it is too late, thus saving them for